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## *Freedom of the Air*

WHAT does the United States hope to obtain for herself out of this war? We have asserted more than once that we have no territorial ambitions. We have the land, vast natural resources, a tremendous productive plant, a vast merchant fleet, the highest developed commercial aviation in the world. What need is there of further territory? Yet there are still expansionist ambitions in the United States. The bulk of the American people only ask a chance to earn their bread in peace and security, a peace which will not collapse into worldwide chaos and destruction. It is the ambitions of certain industrial and political leaders that are disturbing.

Take the Senators recently returned from a junket to the battle lines. They were not speaking only for themselves when they expressed concern lest six months after the war the air bases which the United States has built up in every sector of the globe no longer remain in American hands. Could this be considered territorial ambition?

The President and Mr. Churchill happily are thinking in other terms. "Freedom of the air," like "freedom of the seas," is an international conception. Whereas each nation may arrogate to itself the air routes within its boundaries—to government-owned or private companies—flight from country to country would be governed by reciprocity and international agreement. Refueling and servicing would be minimum courtesies exchanged where it would not be permitted to pick up passengers.

Possibly there would have to be some system whereby only profitable ventures would be allowed to operate in this manner, since the danger of government subsidized services being used for espionage or reconnoitering purposes cannot be neglected. At the same time the establishment of new air routes will be so important for the development of remote territories that only government or international subsidies would enable them to operate. The more one looks into the prospects of post-war aviation, the more obvious it becomes that it must be subject to international control.

The United States has great responsibility in this matter. Our huge productive plant, our vast air fleets and the extra time we have had for developing commercial aviation before Pearl Harbor gives us a big head start. Then we have those air bases in other lands. If we insist on holding on to them and exploit our commercial air superiority in ruthless fashion, we shall do much to engender suspicion and national rivalries, to embitter the climate of the post-war years—even to sow the seeds of another conflict.

After the last war the United States underwent a complete revulsion of feeling and withdrew into her own hard shell. This time isolationism tends to take on an even more dangerous form. Isolationism is turning into imperialism. Its exponents all too easily forget that, like the protective tariff, imperialism works both ways.

Our post-war aviation policy is a key to the type of security we are after. Either we shall depend on a preponderance of armament, balance of power alliances and the maintenance of bases as far flung as we can secure them, or we shall cooperate wholeheartedly in building up an ordered world. The hesitancy of our Senate to adopt a resolution parallel to Representative Fulbright's is not a good augury for the latter policy. And if isolationism was instrumental ultimately in bringing us into another global war, we can be sure that imperialism will give us an even shorter interval of peace. "Freedom of the air" is a crucial policy.

## *Foundation for the Peace*

THE FIRST step in setting up a lasting peace is the setting forth of its basic principles. Coincident with this is the securing of wide acceptance of these principles. Finally comes the application of accepted principles to specific terms and institutions.

As religion has the fundamental things to say about the nature of man and society, about justice and mercy and the ends of human activity—things based on reason, revelation and tradition—it rightly has the leading place when it comes to



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formulating principles of peace. There is a wealth of religious literature on the subject from the earliest times; perhaps more in our own war-torn times than ever before.

Hence the importance of the joint "Declaration on World Peace" signed by a hundred and fifty American religious leaders and released to the nation's press, October 7. For Jews and Christians, Catholics and Protestants have a common adherence to such teachings as universal dependence on God's law, defense of the human person and group, social justice within the nation, and international institutions that will guarantee to God's creatures their inviolable rights. And in a world still grappling with the results of the industrial revolution, all this implies a just and flourishing international economic life.

Such objectives even in an imperfect, approximate form are beyond the reach of any one nation by itself, or the adherents of any one religion, no matter how worldwide. Religious statements on these matters have in varying degrees had an important educative effect. It has remained to bring them together, to bring out for all to see the common direction in which our social aspirations have been tending.

The joint statement of October 7 is an important step toward winning the coming peace. Each of its seven points is backed up by more detailed enunciations of principle: such as papal allocutions, resolutions adopted by the Rabbinical Assembly and Protestant denominational and interdenominational statements. If these principles are unflinchingly insisted on by American adherents of the major religious bodies, there will indeed be some chance of winning the peace. This is inter-faith activity at its utmost value.

### *War Rhetoric*

WITH Naples fallen, President Roosevelt is reported to have told his news conference one morning that the Allied armies marching north through Italy "are on a kind of crusade to liberate Rome, the Vatican and Pope Pius XII." This is, of course, a first class specimen of what might be described as the rhetoric of war, and as such it is permissible. Yet the word "crusade" is a troublesome word, and some people might take it at face value. Hence we feel we cannot let it pass without notice.

Were there any real evidence that the Vatican and the Pope are in danger from the Germans, that the Pope is considered by them as a sort of hostage, then we might, strictly speaking, describe our armies as on an expedition of rescue, desirous of liberating a man whom all but the most extreme anti-clericals respect and admire. Yet even then—and as this is written we have no such evidence whatever—"crusade" would be too strong, for the Allied intention would be limited. There is no use pretending anything else. The English and Americans would wish to preserve the Vatican harmless and set the Pope free. To desire this much is not to go on a crusade, especially as this would be no more than an incidental aim—a purpose incidental to the main purpose, which is winning the war. Indeed only by accident have events taken the shape they have taken; had the Allies been in Rome to forestall the German occupation, we would have done precisely what we are doing; we would have marched north through Italy, and the Pope would have needed no rescuing. Then the Germans might have counterattacked in a "crusade" of their own—to liberate the Pope from the clutches of the vicious capitalistic democracies.

Turning the thing inside out does sound silly. And that, we believe, is the ultimate answer to all those who accuse the Holy See of fascism. Every last man of us—Catholic or Protestant or Jew—takes it for granted that the Pope would breathe freer with our troops around him than he does under the eye of a nazi regiment. And the more we reflect on it, the more we are convinced this is the plain truth. In their moments of candor, even the German propagandists implicitly admit it. For Christianity, however much it may at times be forced to deal with powers of darkness, lives best in an atmosphere of love and not in one of hatred and violence.

### *N.B.*

THE CONTRIBUTION of all the nations to the one nation, America, is something we have long stressed and something which is coming more and more to be understood. Those interested in such matters and in learning more about them are recommended to acquire a little pamphlet called "We Americans," being the October number of the New York Public Library's *Branch Library Book News*. It lists three score and ten books, has an excellent brief foreword and a note on the foreign language collections in that institution. But the bibliography is what makes "We Americans" deserve the highest praise. It is the best short compilation of the kind we have seen. Its books are adult books, chosen with an eye to literary merit as well as utility, and with real discrimination and objectivity. It costs ten cents, postpaid.

### *The Frontier Issue*

ELSEWHERE in these pages we discuss the question of Russia's western frontier—the most ticklish of the political questions now confronting the United Nations. We also include in our communications column letters expressing a different view. We plan later to publish a reply from a Polish source.

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# Mr. Aurelio

BEFORE you can be elected by the voters you have to be nominated by a party and placed on a list of party nominees so that the voters can vote for you. Well, there is a man called Aurelio in New York who was overheard (the wire was tapped) telephoning to a man called Costello in New York to thank him for services rendered. Thank you, said Mr. Aurelio to Mr. Costello, because I am now on the ballot as a candidate of the Democratic Party and it sure is thanks to you. When this conversation was given out to the papers by the District Attorney it was embarrassing to the Democratic Party because what the papers permitted themselves to quote, without fear of libel, tended to show that Mr. Costello was the kind of person the Democratic Party would be embarrassed to acknowledge having as an advisor. Mr. Costello, the papers said, was a racketeer. And if Costello was a racketeer it followed that Aurelio was not worthy to wear the racing colors of the Democratic Party. It happened that Mr. Aurelio, the Democratic candidate, was accepted also by the Republican Party—because in local affairs a deal can lead to a deal—and so both Republicans and Democrats were left with a candidate they did not want.

There ensued highly diverting and prolonged litigation to have Mr. Aurelio's name removed from the ballot. At this writing it still is on the ballot. After all, Mr. Aurelio has committed no crime. His name on the ballot just makes New York politics look not so refined.

But you can go quite far back in history without finding a time when New York politics were as exquisitely conducted as we imagine—erroneously—Athenian politics to have been in the golden age. And if you live where it is admitted that New York has always been a cesspool, you can range our country far and wide and there are, and always have been, plenty of scandals all over the country—ever since there have been cities and elections, politicians and voters.

The Aurelio case is a mild, clean case as such matters go. There has been no evidence of money passed. In the good old days the press could have printed the friendly Aurelio-Costello telephone conversation every day for a week and nobody would have been in the least embarrassed. I do not believe that anyone is seriously embarrassed today. It is just a little political story. Of no importance.

When election day comes round a great many voters will vote the straight Democratic or Republican ticket whether Aurelio's name is on it or is not. A certain number of voters who like to pick and choose names on the voting machine will vote for Aurelio because they will have remembered reading the name somewhere and will not have remembered in what connection. They will be under the pleasant impression that they are being particularly intelligent. Should there also be—and very likely there will be—somebody called Costello running for office, for the same reasons and in the same way he will pick up some extra votes. Of course there will be a certain number of serious students of affairs who will vote against Aurelio and, just to make sure, against anybody called Costello because he might be a cousin or something.

That's the way it goes, and when you believe in democracy that's the way it is going to go for a very long time. Perhaps forever. Until the end of the world. Somehow it does not seem to interfere too much with the freedom of the citizen. If you want to call it by a big word, if you want to talk about political corruption, then still it does not seem to interfere too much with the activities of the decent citizen, the hopes of the decent citizen and the opportunities for virtuous service which are open to him.

On this magazine we are, of course, all for civic virtue. This is no vote for Aurelio. But—off the record—the excitement in the newspapers leaves us cold. Wire-tapping is not a practice we love, anyhow. The predicament in which the Democratic and Republican Party machines find themselves leaves us amused. Just why they were placed in this predicament, the public does not know and there is no Lincoln Steffins to tell the inside story. The District Attorney has stated that he happened upon the telephone conversation while in pursuit of other and strictly professional interests. And then he got interested in Reform—just as D. A.'s, in detective stories and out of them, have been interested in Reform, now and then and from time to time, especially round election time, throughout all the flamboyant history of American municipal government. So that this picture of the crusader, the culprit, and, possibly, of the goat can be framed with the other Currier and Ives. Some other time we will be indignant.

But this time we will not be indignant because when we were reading about Mr. Aurelio and Mr. Costello we saw some pictures in the paper. There was a picture of a woman in Naples and an American soldier was holding her child in his arms. There was a picture of a lot of Neapolitans crawling all over an American Jeep. There was a picture of a hospital in Naples with sick people lying on the floor.

The Neapolitans, too, used to have elections, and they voted any which way. There were too many poor and you could buy a vote for a nickel. Well, they were like we are only worse, much, a great deal worse. I do not know what hopes they placed in their democratic machinery, or whether they used it intelligently or much. I expect that when they did use it all too often they were disappointed. (It makes a difference whether a country is rich or poor.) I know that the democracy they had was taken away from them.

The people of a country sometimes get impatient with tyranny and, on occasion, the Neapolitans have died in the cause of freedom. But sometimes it's the other way round: a few men get impatient with the people, and with the people's political parties, so impatient, so critical, so superior that they make themselves tyrants of the people for the people's sake. That is what they say; what Mussolini said—and that is fascism.

So that it's all right to be indignant about Mr. Aurelio. But with measure.

C. G. PAULDING.

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# The Frontier Issue

FOR SOME days the newspapers have been full of the impending conference in which it is expected that Anthony Eden, Vyacheslaff M. Molotoff and Cordell Hull will attempt to iron out a joint policy in which all three of their nations can participate. Of course it may be that no agreement will be reached and no joint policy will result. It is our belief that if this conference—or some later conference, and one not much later—should thus fail, the effect upon the future may well be disastrous; a war between ourselves and Russia, to which some citizens seem to look forward so lightly, is the very last thing we must want. It would only come after Russia felt herself sure of help from Germany, and if the present temper of the English people continues, it is doubtful whether we could count upon England as an ally against Russia. The only outcome possible, then, would be a war of attrition by air which would involve destruction on a scale we have not yet dreamed, and such a war could last for a generation, ending in the ruin of everything we know.

The New York *Times* recently quoted excerpts from an editorial in the London *Economist* which are well worth reproducing:

> There is a time when the great flood of human affairs, after moving slowly for a space through familiar country, gathers speed and plunges forward on a new and unknown course. Such times are full of tremendous possibilities. The new direction of the flood can be canalized or left to work destruction. A few right or a few wrong decisions taken in these times can mold the history of a century in such a crisis as is upon us now . . . The next weeks, the next days, may decide whether this tide, taken at the flood, will lead on to the future or whether through distrust or plain incompetence it will be allowed to sweep forward, carrying on it boulders and wreckage to break down any possible peace.

What is actually the principal point at issue between England and America and Russia? A certain amount of mystery has been allowed to surround this. But it in fact boils down very largely to the question of Russia's post-war western frontiers. The Soviets have made it very clear what they require. They want the Baltic States, a piece of Finland, the portions of Poland absorbed in 1939 by agreement with Germany, and a rather indefinite portion of Rumania. There is also talk of access to the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf, although these demands do not seem ever to have been clearly defined. Thus the stumbling block for agreement lies in the frontier issue, although, of course, one should not minimize psychological barriers of distrust. In the long run probably these barriers will count as heavily if not more heavily than the specific questions of boundary lines, although the two things interlock, and the psychological atmosphere cannot be cleared unless some solution agreeable to all parties is found for the frontier.

American objection to Russia's claims centers around our devotion to the principle of self-determination for nations, whether they be large or small. We feel very strongly that people have a right to run their own affairs and that we must not be a party to any political solution under which any national independence is sacrificed. Parenthetically it should be pointed out that in the conditions laid down for a just peace the Pope also gives his support to this principle. British feelings on the same subject are certainly not so strong as ours, for the British Empire has not hesitated to destroy sovereignties which it wished to absorb, yet there has always been a deep emotional current in English life sympathizing with the national aspirations of small peoples. Thus there have always been English champions of Ireland and we all remember how Lord Byron died for Greek independence. There is evidence that this type of British mind weighs more heavily in England today than it ever did in the past, for it is a mind generally in key with labor, and British labor is today playing a more genuine rôle in political life than it ever did, even when Britain had a labor government. (Yet it is labor which particularly admires Russia.) Thus there is undoubtedly sentiment in England against allowing Russia to absorb the territory she wants. It should likewise be noted that, prior to the outbreak of war in 1939, the reason it proved impossible to work out an alliance between France, England and Russia was precisely the refusal of the two Western democracies to allow Russia this same rectification of her frontiers, and it was precisely Hitler's willingness to allow it which made possible the famous non-aggression pact which so scandalized the liberal world in August, 1939.

Here we are, in 1943, confronted with the same difficulty. At least we cannot accuse the Russians of having been inconsistent! Naturally the simplest way out, from the point of view of sheer expediency—and even of what is called "appeasement," when it is applied to fascist states—would be simply to say to Stalin, "Have it your own way, Joe. Take what you want and we won't say anything. After all you are bearing the brunt of the losses in this war, and if it had not been for you we perhaps would have lost our own independence, or be in the process of losing it. So what do we care about a few million Central Europeans who want to be independent."

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In so far as the Baltic States are concerned, their moral claim to autonomy is clear. This is not to say that there are no Latvians, Esthonians or Lithuanians who would themselves like once again to be incorporated into Russia. In any

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small country you will find people who think that the best solution for their nation's smallness would lie in amalgamation with a powerful neighbor. We have seen this in Belgium, in the Netherlands, in Denmark, in Canada. But these people constitute a minority, and in the case of the Baltic States probably a very small minority, since they have experienced the harshness of Russian rule under both Czarist and communist régimes. We can safely assume that the vast majority want to be left to enjoy their own freedom in peace. To hand them over lock, stock and barrel would be to work a real injustice against them.

The case with Finland is morally the same; yet we should remember that Finland is in a far more compromising position because she has been willing to collaborate actively with Germany. The case with Rumanian territories is morally somewhat weaker. But far less clear is the question of the Polish frontier, for here the moral issue is not one of autonomy. It is so complex, just claims on both sides are so strong that one is forced to conclude that the solution—if any—will inevitably be a solution of expediency.

Let it be said at once—and we said this long ago—that absorption by Russia undoubtedly constitutes as bitter a pill as any in the international pharmacopoeia. Again and again the Soviet State has shown its utter disregard for what we conceive to be basic human rights, for what every Christian conceives to be basic human rights. It massacres people for their political views. It ships thousands upon thousands of innocent persons to Siberia in order to solve some political problem. Its attitude toward religion has been notorious for more than twenty years; only recently do we see any evidences of change in this connection, and even these evidences are what might be described as equivocal. Hence turning anyone over to Russia is a very different thing, let us say, from an equivalent absorption by the British Empire, which, with all its bloody faults, always in principle recognized a form of law compatible with justice.

The Polish business, if we are to appraise it fairly, requires a certain knowledge of history. After the last war the Polish State was reconstituted out of three empires. An attempt was made to establish its frontiers on an honest ethnic basis. Unfortunately violence and disorder continued to rule supreme throughout Eastern Europe for some time after the Treaty of Versailles. Thus undoubtedly Poland was cheated in the Silesian Plebiscite thanks to use of force by German nationalists. But by the same token, after her war with Russia which was concluded with the Treaty of Riga, Poland showed that she herself had imperial ambitions, and in the territory which she then acquired to the East there were probably a majority of non-Poles. It must be remembered that throughout this portion of Europe national groups overlap and are inextricably intertwined in such a fashion as to make a true ethnic frontier utterly impossible. In any case, the original theoretical frontier, named after Lord Curzon, who worked it out as well as he could, is approximately the same as that which resulted from the agreement between Hitler and Stalin and is therefore also approximately the same as that which Stalin now wants for the future.

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Poland's imperial ambitions were demonstrated in other minor grabs. She grabbed from Lithuania and she did not hesitate to grab after Munich. It is notorious that Polish nationalists firmly believe that the only solution of the problems of Eastern Europe lies in a "Greater Poland," which would extend from the Baltic to the Black Sea and which would take in most of the Ukraine. Nor was Poland's treatment of her minorities anything of which to be proud.

Indeed this treatment constitutes the strongest moral argument against Poland's claims to the territories which Russia wants to absorb. For it is precisely in these regions that the Poles persecuted fellow Catholics merely because they used the Eastern Rite rather than the Latin Rite—a scandalous situation, specially after the declaration from Rome that anyone seeking to change an Eastern Rite Christian into a Latin Rite Christian is *ipso facto* excommunicate. Thus a French Jesuit, who had spent five years in these borderlands, wrote in the French Jesuit monthly, *Etudes* (December 5, 1939), that the Poles in those regions "bitterly opposed Catholic propaganda of Eastern Rite. Public opinion, the press, official circles denounced as impious treason the existence of Catholic missionaries who dared to present Catholicism under a form which was not that of the 'Polish religion.' Something more: they tried to practice, and sometimes with violence, the *compelle intrare*. In July, 1938, Poland witnessed methods of proselytism which can only be compared to the dragonnades." Further evidence is the energetic protest of Bishop Andrew Szepticky, head of Poland's Uniates, against arbitrary acts committed by Poles in their association with Greek Orthodox. Bishop Szepticky was effectively silenced and the newspaper which published his protest was suppressed. And Polish anti-Semitism is notorious. Thus if one is to accuse the Russians of religious persecution, the Poles are likewise guilty, even though their guilt may not be quite so heavy.

Strangely enough one of the principal historic buttresses of Polish imperialism has been the Belloc-Chesterton school of English thought, which has looked upon communist Russia as a menace against which the West needs a shield (though Heaven knows shields of this sort have

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been shown to be flimsy). As early as 1919 Chesterton wrote the following lines:

> . . . We know that a flood threatens the West from the meeting of two streams, the revenge of Germany and the anarchy of Russia; and we know that the West has only one possible dyke against such a flood, which is not the mere existence, but the might and majesty of Poland. We know that without some such Christian and chivalric shield on that side, we shall have half Europe and perhaps half Asia on our backs . . . The Poles have raised revolution after revolution, when three colossal Empires prevented them from being a nation at all. It is not in the realm of sanity to suppose that, if we make them half a nation, they will not some day attempt to be a whole nation. But we shall come back to the place where we started, after another cycle of terror and torment and abominable butchery—and to a place where we might, in peace and perfect safety, stand firm today.

The Poles themselves are taking advantage of this sort of thinking to argue that under no circumstances must any of their former territory be turned over to Russia. Yet is it not reasonable to suppose that if Poland were restored to her pre-1939 boundaries, exactly the same sort of persecution would reappear in the eastern borderlands, and the Polish State itself would be threatened with the same disunity which by 1938 had become a national scandal (see an article in THE COMMONWEAL for June 3, of that year).

There remains the question of the injustice which would be wrought upon the inhabitants of all the new territories Russia says she must have. We still believe that the solution we ourselves proposed over a year ago is the only viable solution. A general guarantee of local autonomy for these territories, coupled with Russian management of their foreign policies and military establishments. On June 19, 1942, we wrote:

> There are many sincere and liberal-minded persons who are horrified at the thought of a United Nations compact admitting Russia's claims along her western frontier. Of course—and this cannot be too much emphasized—these claims must not be admitted to the point of absolute possession, absolute absorption of all these border peoples into the Soviet system, lock, stock and barrel. That would be tragic. But it would be equally tragic to spurn the Russian demands, for to do this would merely end in precisely the kind of total absorption we should seek to resist. A victorious Russia, having borne the heat and burden of the day, will not calmly accept the decisions of British or American doctrinaire idealism. It is therefore wiser to make the best, the most just bargain we can rather than truly to sell the border peoples down the river by insisting upon what the Russians consider politically and militarily impossible.

# *Old Settlers' Picnic*

## In Dakota Territory

*By* **T. D. Lyons**

THE YEAR after the "sheep fiasco" on the Big Place near Redstone, the crop prospect in the spring was most encouraging; and by June 15 everybody could see that there would be a regular bonanza crop of Dakota No. 1 hard, which would go twenty bushels to the acre or better. The standard brand of Dakota optimism created so much enthusiasm that a meeting was called in the Redstone Mercantile Establishment to consider plans for a full fledged Fourth of July celebration with a parade, a brass band, a baseball game by teams in uniform, the reading of the Declaration of Independence, and an eloquent address by the orator of the day. The debate in favor of the move was led by Langley Pierce, who affected a brand of super-patriotism based on his claims as a volunteer federal soldier and an Indian fighter. My father flatly vetoed the proposition with the statement that we had had two failures and that everybody ought to work every possible hour to save the big crop. He said, "My teams will be at work every day from now until snow flies, putting up hay, plowing corn, harvesting small grain, thrashing and fall plowing. Let the celebration wait till we get some crop money in the till."

Langley attempted to deride the argument on the ground that my father was a Democrat and hence not quite so earnestly patriotic as an old soldier like himself and suggested that the matter be referred to the G.A.R. Captain Palmer, who was commander of the Phil Kearney Post, took Langley rather sharply to task and said, "Pierce, you're just anxious to put on a red sash and gallivant up and down the streets on that old spavined pacer of yours. Now when it comes to politics and patriotism I heard down at Louisville at the national encampment that you voted for John Bell of Tennessee, in 1860, and that you volunteered as a federal soldier by the galvanized route, after Custer's troopers had taken you prisoner in the Shenandoah Valley. Also, I don't believe you scalped quite as many of Red Cloud's braves as you sometimes tell under the inspiration of honest John Barleycorn."

This rather harsh reprimand did not visibly affect Langley, although his long gray military moustache sagged somewhat and seemed to take

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on a deeper yellow stain from tobacco spit. However, he pressed the argument no further and the Fourth of July celebration did not materialize. There was considerable disappointment over the matter, because some of the advocates of the move had prematurely arranged and had printed a program. It consisted of a song by the quartette from the literary society, "Tenting Tonight on the Old Camp Ground"; a reading by Mrs. Reeves, "The Blue and the Gray"; and a recitation to be given by one of the young ladies entitled "Somebody's Darling"—the prize piece from "Southern Lyrics." Years later, I myself, was accorded the privilege of appearing on the resin-scented new pine platform in the open air under the blue heaven of Dakota sunshine, to declaim "The Man With the Musket Is Mine." So, I can appreciate the disgruntled feelings of those who had been invited to participate when they heard that the celebration had been called off.

The harvest came with no marring incident. We worked two shifts of big Percheron horses and were in the field from daylight to dark. Thrashing went off successfully—wheat averaged twenty-two bushels to the acre and brought seventy cents at the Redstone elevators. All other crops were bountiful. Money circulated again among the hard-up Dakota sod-busters, and there were high praises for the great "new country" which made man independent with one season's crop. One afternoon, in September, George M. Stratton and Captain Palmer came into the Redstone Mercantile Establishment and proposed that some sort of a harvest home jubilation should be had. Judge Baldwin said, at once, that he had heard that there had been an old settlers' picnic in Brown County and that he would suggest a similar event to be held soon near Forestburg on the Jim River, the county seat of Miner County. There was enthusiastic approval, and plans were immediately made to secure the use of Wixon's Grove, a beautiful grove of cottonwood trees. My father telegraphed to Will Sterling, Dakota's silver-tongued orator, asking when he could be present to make the address to the pioneers, and received word that September 21 would suit him. Mighty preparations went forward for the event. Al Barbour's all-family baseball team was matched against the Forestburg semi-professionals who engaged Art Hildebrand, the Spink County rancher, to pitch for them. Mr. Hildebrand was as famous in his way in Dakota and Minnesota town baseball circles as Clark Griffiths later became in Chicago. He had won laurels as a college pitcher in the Ivy League, come to Sioux Falls as a semi-professional and bought a section of Dakota dirt and started ranching. His name was enough to insure a crowd of baseball fans.

The matter of lunch and dinner was given serious consideration. The danger of fire to the beautiful cottonwood grove had brought forth a regulation that no fires even for cooking could be set inside the forty acres of cottonwoods. This created something of a dilemma as the loyal Dakotans could not be deprived of hot coffee. Arrangements were made to have Jim Madsen drive his dray to the public highway, outside the tree claim. Two gasoline stoves were installed and on each a wash-boiler of coffee was made, one boiler having as its base Arbuckle's coffee, in five-pound, cheese-cloth bags, and the other being founded on Lion's celebrated coffee mixture. The agreeable fumes were enjoyed a quarter of a mile from the grove. Since it was necessary for many of the settlers to leave home at daybreak for the long drive to the Jim River, it was agreed that lunch would be served at 10:30, and the Women's Relief Corps, an auxiliary of the Grand Army, undertook this pleasant function.

They served a lunch modeled on military rations: baked beans, hard-tack, fried bacon, and all the coffee you could drink—the whole for a dime. However, the great eating event was the dinner to be served at 2:00 in the afternoon, by the Catholic ladies, a privilege which was granted to them to aid the building fund of Sacred Heart Church in Redstone. They served dinner for a quarter, including ice cream, cake and coffee. Mighty forty-pound hams with a beautiful layer of white fat stuffed with cloves were set out on tables consisting of loose pine boards set on saw horses. There was a big rare roast beef of prime ribs, whole roasted chickens, but no turkeys, since it was an unwritten Dakota adage that turkeys should be served for the first time of the season on Thanksgiving Day. There were capacious dishes of potato salad, pleasantly aromatic of what the poet called the "onion fruit." These were garnished plenteously with sliced hard-boiled eggs. Watermelon rind preserves and preserved yellow tomatoes were popularly present and the desert consisted of lemon pie, chocolate cake and deep dish dried-apple pie, well-spiced with cinnamon and nutmeg—this last being the most popular dish.

The morning of the great day dawned clear and bright and we drove out of Redstone, shortly after daybreak, in the democrat spring wagon, headed for the Jim River. There was a golden haze of fall in the air, as we drove by the acre which in June had been covered with the blossoms of the praire wild rose. Now the flowers which were in bloom were the lemon-colored goldenrod and the lordly sunflower fifteen feet high—its flowers had a diameter of fourteen inches and the yellow burnished petals had a flaming tinge in the glorious Dakota sunrise. We drove past many abandoned sod houses; the gophers had dug holes in the side of walls and at one place the sharp-eyed weasel was on watch sunning himself and

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waiting for his prey. When we reached the site of the grove, my father stopped the team, to view an amateur exhibition of Dakota vegetables. There was a pile of early Goodrich potatoes weighing a pound and a half apiece, squash and pumpkins with a circumference of six feet each—some of the settlers claimed they had bigger ones at home; they hadn't brought them because they couldn't get them in the lumber wagonbox. There were great piles of golden corn, watermelons, citrons, beets twenty inches in circumference and cucumbers sixteen inches long, winter cabbage that weighed twenty pounds apiece were on display. Gooseberries, Dakota currants and pieplant gave promise of future confections. We did not eat the full ration of the ten cent lunch, but contented ourselves with hardtack and coffee for a nickel, as we desired to reserve our appetites to do proper execution on the great dinner.

★

Mr. Sterling was introduced promptly at 11:00 and undoubtedly made a beautiful address. He was not yet thirty and was famous in three states as a lawyer and orator. When he concluded, I heard Judge Baldwin say to my father that Will Sterling can be the first United States Senator when Dakota is admitted to statehood. But Mr. Sterling, in the midst of his early fame, went to his long home under Dakota sod, before he was thirty-five years of age.

The songs and recitations came to an end, and the great important business of dinner occupied the entire attention of the picnic from 12:30 to 2:00. At that hour the ball game was called. Al Barbour's team was made up entirely of the Barbour family, nine brothers and first cousins, who were all Dakota farmers. Al's sister, Mayme, just as a stunt, would go behind the bat and catch for one inning. This never failed to thrill the crowd. The game was exciting, replete with high fouls and long flies, many of which were muffed. So both sides made many runs. It was expected that Art Hildebrand's prowess would snow the Barbour team under, but the Forestburg players had great difficulty in holding Art's lightning throws and let in many runs. The Barbour team came out on top. The next and concluding event was the territory-wide foot race, open to all amateurs for a three-hundred dollar prize.

This was won easily by our favorite, Sam Partridge, although there had been rumors of a famous contestant from the Bad Lands, who had the sobriquet of the Bad Lands cowboy. There was some disappointment when he did not appear, although my father told George M. Stratton that he was as well satisfied with his absence as he understood that the Bad Lands comboy, who claimed the name of Pat O'Brien, was a protege of "Slick Jim" Sanborn, the owner and operator of the Gold Miners Exchange, a notorious Fort Pierre gambling house. While they were talking, there was a buzz of excitement in the crowd, and Mr. Sanborn, himself, walked over and greeted them, saying he was sorry that he arrived late, as he had a friend with him, who would have beaten the socks off of Sam Partridge. Mr. Sanborn's plan worked, and Mr. F. B. Ward, the Redstone banker, very shortly put up a bet of a thousand dollars, most of it his own money, against Mr. Sanborn, on the question of the speed of Sam Partridge vs. Pat O'Brien, the Bad Lands cowboy.

When Mr. O'Brien appeared in his running suit, it was very evident that he did not look at all like the ordinary conception of an O'Brien or a cowboy; he was tall, lank, dark, and his straight legs had not been bowed by saddle work. My father remarked to Judge Baldwin that he looked very much like a half-breed Assinoboine. In any event, he was fleet as a deer and after letting Sam lead for the first half of the race he ran by him and won easily by about a yard. He went immediately to the buckboard in which he had arrived with Mr. Sanborn and drove the team up to the edge of the crowd, awaiting Mr. Sanborn, who in turn was looking for Mr. Stratton, who, as stakeholder, had possession of the $2,000 bet. Mr. Ward and two other men were in earnest conversation with Mr. Stratton, so finally Mr. Sanborn walked over saying he would like to have his money as he had a long trip ahead of him, and issuing a jovial collective invitation to the group, to come and get revenge at his Fort Pierre gambling house, Mr. Ward finally said that he protested the bet and desired that it be held by the stakeholder until he could investigate the amateur status of the Bad Lands cowboy. Mr. Sanborn then astonished the group by stating that amateur status was not involved, since the cowboy had not raced in the regular contest, but merely in a side race.

Mr. Stratton did not accept this logic and became very hesitant about delivering the money. Sanborn, who was something of a bully and was known to be quick on the trigger, finally said, "It's my money and I'm going to have it." He threw back his vest and displayed a pearl-handled pistol. A short man, a stranger, had stepped into the crowd, just opposite Sanborn. He said quietly, "Gunplays don't go, here." There was something in his quiet voice that intimidated Sanborn somewhat, but he snarled, "Who in the Hell are you!" A tall, slender man, who had stepped up to Sanborn's side touched him lightly on the arm and said "Jimmy, that's my new deputy, just fresh from Wyoming; we have warrants for you and Slim LaFleche *alias* Pat O'Brien. The last Dakota legislature made the footrace badger game

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a felony." My father stepped forward and shook hands with the tall man, greeting him as Captain Seth Bullock, the United States Marshal.

That night, we rode back through the splendors of the Dakota moon, and saw the glories of the northern lights. My father said, "I would rather own a section of Dakota land than a bank in Omaha."

# Communications

## "MAN'S UNKNOWN ANCESTORS"

Detroit, Mich.

TO the Editors: Having just finished reading "Man's Unknown Ancestors" (Raymond W. Murray, C. S. C.), I am at a loss to account for the bitterness of Dr. Kater's review (COMMONWEAL, Sept. 3). A biologist, Dr. Kater could scarcely have expected to be taken very seriously had he condemned even the anthropological portions of this volume (he liked them); what weight, then, did he suppose would be attached to his ill-humored castigation of the chapter on religious history? Is there not something grotesque in this biologist looking scornfully down his nose at the priest-author and muttering about "some half-baked course in religion"?

Father Murray is professor of sociology at Notre Dame University; he has been President of the American Catholic Sociological Association, and is the urbane author of three competent works in social science. Is it too much to expect that a critic of his work should be as urbane? Surely a reviewer of the story of the Neanderthals need not himself act like one.

J. E. COOGAN, S. J.
*Professor of Sociology.*

## RUSSIA

Castleton, N. Y.

TO the Editors: For weeks, yes, for months now, I have been studying the different proposals for a future world as presented to us by moralists, religious leaders, writers, diplomats and politicians, and I notice that all of them have missed one small fact, namely, that Russia has already remade the future world. Russia has announced that she will incorporate into her vast body all the countries formerly possessed by the tzars, and that she will dominate all the Balkans and the rest of the Slavic world. Who will prevent her from carrying out her plans? Surely not the Allies. Basing her future plans upon this fact, England is already preparing a new Western Block composed of England, France, Italy and later Germany, a block in which all the small Western European countries will have no voice. Are the moralists and the religious leaders shocked by this dismissal of all the small European countries? They seem to be; but they were not when Asia was partitioned, when China was dismembered and when Africa became the looting ground of the white man. Can we believe them now? History is against them, and Russia and England know it.

What about our country? Will America be isolated

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by the European grouping of nations? In the light of the Russian and English plans it will be, and hence the American continents must be prepared to work in union for their own protection. The Far East may contribute toward the cooperation of the great Powers or it may produce another war, unless America forgets her charitable impulses toward the great Powers in Europe. The sooner we return to Americanism, both North and South, the better for the future world and for us.

The Rev. FRANCIS J. GOSTOMSKI.

Chicago, Ill.

TO the Editors: It is disconcerting to see people who love America propose that we pay a communist dictator's price for collaboration in the post-war period. What are Stalin's terms? The craven sacrifice of Poland and the Baltic states and of the moral principle their desertion entails.

Now that the tide of war has definitely turned, it's our bounden duty to do a service to the Polish people instead of prejudiced disservice. Strict justice demands keeping in the forefront the will of the Poles to resist Germany when others winced. And here is where the red star of the Soviet does not shine. There were two second fronts practically shoved right down Russia's throat, the Polish front in 1939 and the French front in 1940. But Russia chose to gang up with Germany until the signatories knew it was too late for a second front. So today Germany and Russia know what they are fighting for, as Russia knew in 1939 why she stabbed bleeding Poland and raped little Finland.

But the "liberals" would have us appease Russia even by promising her Polish territory. In the name of sanity, whom is Russia fighting for, primarily with our equipment and foodstuffs? The Italians surrendered with alacrity to the English and Americans. Would they have to the Russians? Similarly will the Poles receive the English and Americans with open arms, but they will not the Russians. Why not? Every one knows but the "liberals." The Soviet has to give up something else besides the Comintern. Everybody is longing for social justice and better distribution, but 98 percent of the Europeans will definitely not stand for a Russian-Asiatic committee of a "free Poland" or a "free Germany," any more than they did for the Soviet Committee of "loyalist" Spain.

Let Russia learn how to govern in a civilized way the one sixth of the globe already in its possession before torturing anew its Polish neighbors. Moreover, if all the world gangsters are going to be courtmartialed together with Mussolini, Hitler and Tojo, how will Stalin and Litvinoff escape public vengeance for all their crimes since 1917? Justice demands retribution, no matter how bravely any gangster defends his own stronghold.

If the Soviet must be appeased with additional colonies, why not pick the right sow by the ear? The greatest disturber of world peace since the rebellion of 1517 has been Germany as personified in historic Prussia. And since the Russians and Prussians are apparently brothers under the skin, why not make Prussia a Soviet colony for ten or twenty years? Poland served two terms under Russia and Prussia during the last 152 years. Why not give Prussia a chance? That would cure Prussia and give her a stiff penance in expiation of her crimes.

Whereas if Russia expects a political plum for the stab of Poland and the rape of Finland, then the US may as well annex the South American Republics for protecting the Western hemisphere against German aggression. Russia may be a great country with brave people, but if that entitles her to the third partition of Poland, then the old Lutheran Kaiser was an angel of light.

GLADYS M. DUBIS.

## JOHN MORLEY

Princeton, N. J.

TO the Editors: We wish to thank you and Mr. Cuthbert Wright for the splendid review of "The Liberal Mind of John Morley" by Warren Staebler which appears in the October 1 issue of COMMONWEAL.

At the same time, we feel we should point out in all fairness that we are co-publishers of the book with the University of Cincinnati, as was stated on the title page.

JEAN MACLACHLAN.
*Princeton University Press.*

## THE LATE LORD KENMARE

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: The death of Lord Kenmare, at Killarney on September 20, recalls the story of an Irish family who combined true-blue Unionist politics with high devotion to the Catholic Church. Descended from the Desmonds on the distaff side, they traced their paternal origin to Sir Valentine Browne, auditor-general of Ireland in the reign of Elizabeth. They fought the King with Sarsfield at the Boyne, and a hundred years later threw in their fortunes, but not their Faith, with the English Crown.

They were learned in the Faith as well as loyal; and when the fifth earl in 1887 married the Hon. Elizabeth Baring, daughter of the English Lord Revelstoke, he not only won her over to the Church but made her an ardent missionary of Catholicism. Famous for its sheer beauty was the chapel she built in Killarney House, with its altar of transparent onyx, its walls of white and green marble, its silver candle-sticks of ancient Irish manufacture. It was known over the whole Catholic world as one of the gems of ecclesiastical art. Famous, too, was her winning for the Church of her own brother, Maurice Baring, the novelist; for out of that conquest great things have come. Others have followed Baring into the Church, among them Gilbert K. Chesterton.

Chesterton's latest biographer, Maisie Ward, tells us that after his own conversion, Chesterton wrote to Maurice Baring to say that, apart from the priest who had given him his final instructions, Baring had done more than any other man to help him into the Church. And with a lovely simplicity Baring wrote to Chesterton to tell him of the numberless candles he had lighted before Our Lady's altar for the conversion of G. K. C.

The sixth earl of Kenmare, who has just died, was

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the son of Elizabeth Baring, a nephew of Maurice. In politics he was a high Tory, as all his people had been for the better part of 150 years. By profession he was both a banker and a journalist. He was a director of the Beaverbrook newspapers, the London *Evening Standard,* the London *Daily Express* and the London *Sunday Express.*

DAVID MARSHALL.

# *The Stage & Screen*

## *September—Take It Away*

AS SOMETHING called "Hairpin Harmony" folded before I could reach the gate, I have no program notes to offer you this week, merely a pair of orchestra tickets to the Theater At Large; but since these are marked—September 1943—I feel it would be a good idea to spend them, assume a fright-wig, cry presto, shoulder the new moon, and draw a conclusion, don't you think? Although we have little indeed to draw on. Certainly no bubbles have appeared in the cauldron and never a "pilot's thumb." However, one interesting manifestation did arise during the month which leads me to believe that some redefinitions are in order; and this concerns the obvious success of the clowns and stunt-men in the show called "Laugh Time" as opposed to those unfortunate actors cast by the only apparent playwrights (and I employ the adjective purely on faith), Messrs. Elmer Rice and Albert Bein.

Now, as I have hinted before in these columns, the similarities between a clown and an actor are endless and easy, whereas the difference is the point. Both players, augmented men, heroes to their valets, these two are opposed only in the nature of their material: the clown's stuff being built sheerly of his skill (style) in combination with the temper of his public; while the true actor is at all times hedged about, bound or drowned in someone else's lines without any immediate chance at his audience at all. Needless to say, this analysis is comprised solely of facts without any attempt at an esthetic evaluation, but I may say that the September results—meager as they are—do prove that it is the players rather than the dramatists who have taken some sort of measure of their world. At the "Vaudeville Show" at the Shubert, any laugh is reared immediately into a roar, and it is there that one finds someone (at least) listening beyond the footlights and taking notice. Elsewhere one can only discover the old, sad, worn vertical conception of a satisfactory creative work: Elmer Rice tittering at Elmer Rice (or perhaps Mrs. Elmer Rice) at the Royale; and, briefly at the Belasco, Albert and Mary Bein coming all the way from **Hollywood to fool themselves. Certainly a display of** egocentricity which can only mean that its perpetrators have either forgotten that the public is an essential in any theater work, or that they are suffering from that most sterile of human failings, scorn.

If I have seemed to deliver the month to the clowns, it is not wholly delivered, simply because the clowns can not possibly hope to satisfy either the whole public or the whole man just now. But it is interesting to note that the little piece of "gayerty" possible to any one of us at this time—between our "fierce events"—is at least examined and encouraged by Frank Fay and his troupe in 44th Street. As for "the whole man," I am afraid it is the playwrights, the boys with actors and designers as well as pen and paper and supposedly plans in their packs, who must somehow wake up to find him pounding their doorstep just as hard as he is. In any case, it is in his interest that I am hoping my September suggestion will be eagerly seized upon by the grateful producers and pressmen who at present owe me so much. Henceforth (please) a small swivel chair anywhere on the aisle for me so that if I cannot (as I have not been able to) find any real interest in the doings in one half of the theater, at least I can turn about and occupy my time in observing the other half. If there isn't a play, at least there is an audience, and I, for one, do not mean to miss a trick. Needless to say, I will be only too glad to *rent* this contraption (when I get it) to any one of the dramatists who might consider it a good idea.

KAPPO PHELAN.

## *The Not-So-Magic Carpet*

OUR MOVING PICTURE camera travels widely this week but returns us to our starting point not much wiser than before. The weaknesses of these films is mainly in their plots. Although *"The Man From Down Under"* manages to hold one's interest, its story is such obviously contrived fiction that it gets annoying. Robert Z. Leonard has directed the first part with breakneck speed as if he didn't want you to have a moment to think about the situation in which Charles Laughton, as Jocko, an unmarried boisterous Australian soldier, snatches a couple of Belgian orphans and takes them back to Australia in 1919. Everyone concerned seems to think the kids are brother and sister, but we're let in on the secret that they're not related at all. Time passes in Australia. Nipper (now Richard Carlson) encouraged by Jocko, becomes a prizefighter. His "sister" (Donna

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Reed) emerges from finishing school finished and beautiful. Jocko manages Nipper until the latter is hurt in a brutal and suspenseful fight; then Jocko manages, or rather mismanages, a hotel. When Nipper realizes he is falling in love with his "sister," he leaves home without explanation, much to his family's anger and disgust. Comes World War II. The family is finally reunited in an exciting but implausible scene during the invasion of Australia by a Japanese bomber crew. Everything works out all right when Father Polycarp (Arthur Shields) explains that the boy and girl are not brother and sister and can now fall properly in love. And there is a promise of peace and happiness for beaming Mr. Laughton and Binnie Barnes whom he left at the church door years ago and with whom he has been battling ever since. Wells Root and Thomas Seller wrote this script in which there is too much coincidence and last-minute solution for my taste. And the action includes a lot of roguish coyness on the part of Laughton. As a matter of fact the performances throughout are in keeping with the story.

*"The Adventures of Tartu"* is about as convincing as yesterday's comic strips. Perhaps if it had appeared two years ago, it would have merited some attention; for this English film has a good cast, is well set and costumed, and Director Harold S. Bucquet manages to squeeze what excitement he can out of the script. But in the past few years we've been seeing an overdose of spies, and saboteurs in occupied countries. A couple of dozen of our leading stars have tricked and thrown the nazis around through reel after reel; so it is no treat now to see Robert Donat go through the familiar escapades. As an English officer, handsome Robert somehow reaches Rumania, changes his disguise, "escapes" to Czechoslovakia, seeks and gets German protection, obtains the formula for a new gas that is "inconceivable in its deadliness," blows up the gas plant, escapes with a beautiful Czech after holding at bay a whole roomful of German fliers. Valerie Hobson looks pretty, sleek and English as the Czech underground worker who first distrusts and then loves Donat. Glynis Johns turns in a moving performance as a Czech saboteur who is discovered and shot by the nazis. The film has one really tense situation: when the Czech underground think our hero is a German spy and prepare to bump him off. This thrill is hardly worth sitting through 104 minutes of old hat however.

If you don't care at all about plot, you'll find *"Wintertime"* a fairly entertaining musical movie. It is certainly one of the best skating pictures I've seen. William LeBaron's well-lighted production includes some pleasant Canadian winter scenery (a bit artificial, but with nice sky shots and glistening snow and shadows on white hills) and several superior skating acts by Sonja Henie. Miss Henie also does a dance number with Cesar Romero and, while this routine won't go down in history, it shows that her grace on skates carries over to other arts. She is still, however, not an actress; so any film in which she plays the lead is bound to be carried mainly by other performers. This picture relies on the skating scenes, some novel photographic effects of Woody Herman and his Orchestra who do good by the music of Robin and Brown, and on high jinx humor. S. Z. Sakall exhibits his usual charm as the heroine's Norwegian uncle; Jack Oakie is amusing, especially in the episode in which he talks things over with his conscience; and Cesar Romero in his underwear chases through one long scene that is surprisingly funny. The film's editing is pretty haphazard, no doubt because chunks of the puerile plot had to be cut out. Director John Brahm manages to keep things moving at a fast and thoughtless speed. The music promises to be popular, and one of the songs, "Dancing in the Dawn," is first-rate in spite of its silly lyric. The finale in which Henie and ensemble skate on black ice is a beauty.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

# Chesterton

By THEODORE MAYNARD

IT SHOULD be said at once that even the lesser Chestertons were still great. If G.K.C. was not a good lecturer, that he lectured at all showed him to be a great man. He did so at personal sacrifice and in order to make money to subsidize his paper. And if he was not a good editor—as he very well knew—he accepted editorship as an inescapable duty, because he felt that only in this way could he continue his brother Cecil's work. Even the Chesterton who was a somewhat too facile humorist, with an insufficiently disciplined fancy, showed in the waste products of his exuberant imagination how rich that imagination was. Perhaps he should have curbed himself more than he did; but who except Chesterton had such an over-abundance that it needed to be curbed?

But the really great Chesterton—or the essential Chesterton—was the man of thought. In one of his love poems he described himself as the easy mirth of many faces, swaggering pride of song and fight. . .

But under all that there was the man who might be described as a pure contemplative, the man wholly given to thought, and the loftiest kind of thought. His lecturing was only thinking aloud; his conversation was merely thinking in company. As Maisie Ward* truly remarks: "For most people intensity of thought is much more difficult than action. With him it was the opposite. He used his mind unceasingly, his body as little as possible. I remember one day going to see them when he had a sprained ankle and learning from Frances how happy it made him because nobody could bother him to take exercise. The whole of practical life he left to her."

In this connection there are three other quotations drawn from this book. To the somewhat testy H. G. Wells, with whom he managed to maintain his friendship to the end, he wrote in 1933: "The fact that the other side often forget (is) that we began as free-thinkers as much as they did: and there was no earthly power but thinking to drive us the way we went." And when

*Gilbert Keith Chesterton. Maisie Ward. Sheed & Ward. $4.50.

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Father Vincent McNabb described him as "crucified to his thought," another friend protested, "It was his life-long beatitude to observe and ponder and conclude."

But another thing should also be said. Their mother did not put it quite accurately when she said that Cecil had more heart than Gilbert, though from one point of view this was true enough; Gilbert had little in him of the Virgilian sense of the "tears of things." He felt with his head rather than with his heart. That he was not without pathos his poem "The Wife of Flanders" is sufficient to show. Yet even there it is indignation rather than pathos that is expressed. Utterly devoid of any class consciousness, and confiding once to the grandaughter of a Duke, "You and I who belong to the jolly old upper middle classes," he had little actual knowledge of how the poor live, though he was always the champion of the poor. Yet the thing seen in the abstract and even felt in the abstract inspired him to write such passages as that which comes at the end of his "Short History of England."

> Not in any story of mankind has the irony of God chosen the foolish things so catastrophically to confound the wise. For the common crowd of poor and ignorant Englishmen, because they only knew that they were Englishmen, burst through the filthy cobwebs of four hundred years and stood where their fathers stood when they knew that they were Christian men. The English poor, broken in every revolt, bullied by every fashion, long despoiled of property, and now being despoiled of liberty, entered history with a noise of trumpets, and turned themselves in two years into one of the iron armies of the world. And when the critic of politics and literature, feeling that this war is after all heroic, looks around him to find the hero, he can point to nothing but the mob.

The lesser Chesterton, who set out to be funny, and who so frankly enjoyed his own jokes, was indeed often very entertaining. But he was at his best when his humor took the form of a deadly and controlled irony, and when his irony was incandescent with passion. Thus there is that overpowering passage on the Crucifixtion in "The Everlasting Man":

> The grinding power of the plain words of the Gospel story is like the power of mill-stones; and those who can read them simply enough will feel as if rocks had been rolled upon them. Criticism is only words about words; and of what use are words about such words as these? What is the use of word-painting about the dark garden filled suddenly with torchlight and furious faces? "Are you come out with swords and staves as against a robber? All day I sat in your temple teaching, and you took me not." Can anything be added to the massive and gathered restraint of that irony; like a great wave lifted to the sky and refusing to fall? "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me but weep for yourselves and for your children." As the High Priest asked what further need he had of witnesses, we might well ask what further need we have of words. Peter in a panic repudiated him: "and immediately the cock crew; and Jesus looked upon Peter, and Peter went out and wept bitterly." Has anyone any further remarks to offer? Just before the murder he prayed for all the murderous race of men, saying, "They know not what they do"; is there anything to say to that, except that we know as little what we say? Is there any need to repeat and spin out the story of how the tragedy trailed up the Via Dolorosa and how they threw him in haphazard with two thieves in one of the ordinary batches of execution; and how in all that horror and howling wilderness of desertion one voice spoke in homage, a startling voice from the very last place where it was looked for, the gibbet of the criminal; and he said to that nameless ruffian, "This night shalt thou be with me in Paradise"? Is there anything to put after that but a full-stop? Or is anyone prepared to answer adequately that farewell gesture to all flesh which created for his Mother a new Son?

The famous libel action that Godfrey Isaacs brought and won against Cecil Chesterton has found its best treatment here, one very full and very just. It was written by Mr. Sheed, whose wife turned this over to him because he is a lawyer. I have said before that I always thought that Cecil bungled that case very badly, and at that time I was seeing Cecil two or three times every week. But about the *New Witness* time in general Maisie Ward writes one of the least satisfactory parts of an otherwise eminently satisfactory book. Nor does she have a whole-hearted sympathy with the rollicking Chesterton of Fleet Street or the convivial Chesterton of the songs of "The Flying Inn." It is hardly to be expected that she should; if there were no other reason for this, it is to be found in the amusing but unreliable and malicious book that Cecil's widow wrote. There that side of G.K.C. was somewhat exaggerated. And the definite accusation is brought against Frances that, by taking her husband away from Fleet Street to Beaconsfield, she removed him from his friends and so made it impossible for him to burn up in conversation the quantities of drink he consumed.

The thesis is of course absurd, but the facts do not substantiate it. No doubt in his Fleet Street days Gilbert did drink a good deal of beer and wine, but there was absolutely no trace of alcoholism. And for some years after his long illness in 1916 he remained a teetotaler. I can recall how at dinner in his house he would give me a bottle of claret and explain his own abstention with, "My wife won't let me be a Christian." But though he often wrote his articles in public-houses in his early days, it was Cecil who used to edit the *New Witness* in the "George" or the "Essex Arms," producing in the noisy bar his beautifully lucid prose.

The main purpose of "The Chestertons" seems to have been to exalt Cecil at the expense of Gilbert, and still more to settle an obscure grudge against Frances. I could say a good deal about all this, as I knew everybody concerned. But perhaps it is enough to comment that if one wants a perfect illustration of the difference between cleverness and genius one finds it in the two brothers. As for Mrs. Cecil's charge that Gilbert was a frustrated man because Frances refused to consumate her marriage, nobody who saw them together would ever put a moment's credence in such a story. As a matter of fact it was a great grief to Frances that she never had a child. In the hope of obtaining one, she submitted to an operation, regarding which Maisie Ward prints on page 244 of her book a letter from Mrs. Chesterton's doctor. It might,

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however, be said that as documentation this would have had more weight had the doctor's name and the date of his letter been given. I do not have the slightest doubt that it does refer to this operation—about which Frances spoke to several of her intimate friends—but there is nothing in the letter that positively proves that it does. This little defect could easily be remedied, and I think should be, to put the accusation finally out of court. Mrs. Cecil's conduct is all the more deplorable from the fact that she wrote after all the people involved were dead and that she had been left money by both Gilbert and Frances. A still greater obligation was created by Gilbert's having so loyally devoted himself to carry on what Cecil had begun.

Maisie Ward has produced for the first time an immense amount of information about Chesterton's youth. She was fortunate in that nearly all of G.K.'s early friends are still alive. Even those whom he knew later—Shaw and Belloc and Max Beerbohm and Wells and Maurice Baring—are still with us. From some of these friends long letters are quoted—perhaps at too great a length. But though at times the documentation may impede the flow of the narrative, nobody has any right to complain. For now at last we get the full story of Chesterton. If the book is very long, Maisie Ward explains with a somewhat Chestertonian joke that there was a lot of Chesterton to get on the canvas. It is a very full portrait and a very revealing one.

This book contains so much meat that a separate review could be written for every chapter. I pass over the poet and fabulist and literary critic; I also pass over the sociologist, whose importance is not yet realized. And yet of course all the departments of Chesterton's astoundingly varied activities are so integrated that all are treated, at least by implication, when any one of them is under consideration. The point of integration is of course provided by his faith. Concerning his conversion to Catholicism Maisie Ward has supplied much valuable information.

The main lines of the matter had long been fairly common knowledge. Looking back, it seems impossible that, whatever the circumstances of his life had been, he could have failed to find his way into the Church, except through his own deliberate fault. But we knew that it was his wife who had drawn him from Unitarianism to what is called Anglo-Catholicism, and that he was being held back from going further because he was waiting for her to go with him. She was not trying to hold him back, but it came to the same thing, in the case of a man of his deep loyalties and his disinclination to take decisive steps. As Father O'Connor (the "Father Brown,, of the stories) told Maisie Ward's mother: "He will need Frances to take him to church, to find his place in his prayer-book, to examine his conscience for him when he goes to Confession. He will never take these hurdles unaided." But in the end he had to do just that. Not until some years later was Frances able, after a long period of shivering on the brink, to take the plunge herself.

Chesterton's Catholic years were even more productive than those that had gone before, though all his life should be claimed as Catholic. When he lay dying Father Vincent McNabb sang over the author of "Saint Thomas Aquinas" the *Salve Regina* which every Dominican hears on his death-bed. And at his requiem, the Pope named him Defender of the Faith.

# Editors' Choice

MALTA MAGNIFICENT. *Major Francis W. Gerard. Whittlesey.* $2.50.

MODERN NEGRO ART. *James A. Porter. Dryden.* $3.25.

MUSIC FOR ALL OF US. *Leopold Stokowski. S. & S.* $2.50.

## The War's Greatest Hero

THE Armenians about whom Franz Werfel wrote in "Forty Days of Musa Dagh" and the men of the Alcazar reached great heights in defending themselves and their community against terrific odds. Their heroic efforts were in the line of self-preservation. That was Malta's action too, but her successful resistance against the might of the Italian and German air forces had far more important consequences. In fact, as Major Francis W. Gerard says in "Malta Magnificent," "That tiny island of 117 square miles held in her slim hands the destiny of the United Nations."

Here are a few things the author brings forward to substantiate this claim. It is everywhere recognized, and specifically so by the Germans, that Malta controls the route from Gibraltar to the Suez Canal. Not only did reconnaissance over Italy and the Aegean by Malta-based planes keep the Allies informed of enemy convoys, the whereabouts and temper of the Italian fleet, etc., but the submarines and planes based on the island were so successful in holding down supplies to North Africa for the German and Italian forces that Rommel never became strong enough to plunge further in the Middle East. In one month alone 1,000,000 bombs from her planes were launched on enemy targets—and way back in November, 1941. Over 500,000 tons of Axis shipping was sunk, while the Germans and Italians lost over 1,000 planes over that island fortress. In fact, more trained enemy airmen were lost at Malta than all the civilians killed there in those grim two years.

How did the Maltese accomplish what they did? At the beginning they had only four superannuated Gloster-Gladiator fighter planes and six brave pilots who, none the less, took on the formidable Italian air force. Malta is a natural rocky fortress and it was manned all along with a sizable compliment of anti-aircraft guns. At times the air force was so depleted that it had to rely for defense against the mighty Luftwaffe upon those guns alone. The island was bombed steadily for two full years—for five months straight the inhabitants had to undergo incessant attack day and night; they faced General Kesselring's deadly air fleet and the whole Italian air force. There was no place they could go even for a short respite. Moreover the people had to witness the pulverizing of their historic landmarks one by one. Their ports of supply, Alexandria and Gibraltar, were each a thousand miles away and convoys of food and ammunition were prey to land-based Axis air forces. Some ships got through and Malta survived the siege.

Chief among the reasons for such fortitude was Governor William Dobbie, a Plymouth Brother leading a

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deeply Catholic community. His religious faith was so simple and strong that the islanders followed him to a man. The Archbishop of Malta virtually referred to him as the only saint he had met in his whole lifetime. Then there were the Maltese women whose fortitude and endurance were astounding. In addition to the pilots and gunners, there were the brave submarine commanders who kept the enemy at bay. The author says that the people of Malta are the only pure Semites who are Christian; they were converted by Saint Paul and "through all the vicissitudes that have been theirs, through all the desolation of war and conquest, through siege and famine, domination and suppression, the Maltese people have remained true to that message and that faith. . ."

So much for some of the significant facts adduced by Major Gerard. The real charm of this at times cryptic book and the element which serves as a welcome counterbalance to the stark accounts of heroism and destruction is the author's wide range of personal portraits. His picture of the people he met in line of duty or after hours makes the story of Malta's triumph even more thrilling and real. Shortly after the bloody six months siege of Malta by Solyman the Magnificent almost 400 years ago was turned back—in the face of odds of ten to one—came the decisive victory of the Christians over the Turks at Lepanto. History seems about to repeat itself.

## Pardonable Propaganda

BASICALLY we believe it is a mistake to talk about Negro art. Just as we believe it is a mistake to talk about Catholic art. A painting is a good painting or it is a bad painting; its subject matter may be Catholic or Negro or anything else you like, but its quality must be judged by other standards. Had the American Negro retained in this country any of his African tradition, which includes a considerable artistic tradition, then it would be most just to speak of Negro art, as one can properly speak of Celtic art or Byzantine art or Chinese art. It is the existence of a separate tradition which justifies the adjective, and not the fact of the artist's race or religion or ancestry.

Thus one is disposed to greet Mr. James A. Porter's "Modern Negro Art" more as a symptom of a peculiar atmosphere in which we live than as a venture really justified by the facts. Like Catholics, Negroes are widely looked upon as ignorant and unskilled and incapable of the highest human achievement. It is therefore natural that recent years have seen Catholics pointing to such of their co-religionists as have achieved brilliantly in music and art and letters, and yet many of us have felt that to do this was to brand oneself with a certain provincialism —unless, of course, the achievement is specifically religious in its content. It is much truer of Negroes that they have felt the need constantly to remind themselves and the rest of America that members of their race have proved capable of fine work in science, in music, in poetry, in art. But here is also a dangerous provincialism which can degenerate into chauvinism and can undermine critical standards.

Mr. Porter's standards are objective and reasonable. He does not claim for the artists he treats in his book any merit merely because they are Negro. He does insist that Negro artists have had to fight a tougher fight than their white colleagues, thanks to race prejudice. With this one may disagree. It is impossible to base either such a finding or such a disagreement on specific evidence. One has to base it on one's own judgement, built upon a general sum of impressions unconsciously added up together. Is it not rather the truth that Negro artists have had something the same advantage as Dr. Johnson's famous dog who walked on two legs? People have not so much been attracted by the grace shown in the dog's walking as by the fact that the dog walked upright at all. Of course this attitude is not healthy, either. But it seems closer to the truth than Mr. Porter's constant insinuation of exclusion and neglect.

"Modern Negro Art" is a competent, academic survey of the field indicated by its title. It includes biographical and critical treatment of several score artists. Among these a number compare very favorably with white practitioners doing similar work; only two of the very oldest specimens illustrated show any particular Negro flavor—especially is this true of two chickens carved in wood by a slave of Jean LaFitte (approximately 1800). Thus William Simpson's portrait of Caroline Loguen is certainly as good as any portraiture of its day (1845). Duncanson's landscape is quite the equal of the productions of the Hudson River School, which was contemporary with him. Henry O. Tanner did religious subjects based on the Bible which are up to anything of the sort done during the early years of this century. William A. Harper is pleasingly Barbizon. And there are a flock of contemporary painters and sculptors doing work fully as competent as the best produced under WPA auspices. Scarcely a reproduction in this book but shows a painting or a piece of sculpture which you can at once integrate into some artistic movement common throughout its day and age. This is as it should be, but it again emphasizes what was said at the beginning, that the only excuse for segregating this work into a book is the excuse of a necessary propaganda.

Mr. Porter makes an occasional mistake. Thus he tells us that Copley received his technical training in England—which is simply not true. Copley went to England a fully trained artist and lost most of his brilliance because he thereafter tried to make himself into a society painter rather than sticking to his early clarity of style. Mr. Porter remarks, "A painter of religious subjects today is more or less of an anachronism . . ." which makes one wonder a little as to Mr. Porter's acquaintance with a whole field of fine contemporary work, with Chagall, Rouault, Charlot, Loren Ford (to mention a very varied handful). And one can reproach him with suffering from footnoteitis, or inflammation of the apparatus academicus. Yet he has done a useful job, and he has done something else, which is to call our attention to the work of several artists in our American tradition who have real merit and whom we have forgotten.

## Facts and Fancies

AS LONG as Mr. Stokowski talks shop he is extremely interesting and informative. Even when diagrams show air vibrating in a tube, even when he is talking about the mathematical foundations of music, or about scales, harmony, tonality, pitch, key centers, and relativity there is nothing too difficult, nothing that will not add to a layman's comprehension of music—consequently to his enjoyment of music. Mr. Stokowski is a technician and the talk of any technician is extremely interesting to the non-technician if it is clear enough and explains its terms. The short clear chapters of "Music for All of Us" cover the wide technical field of music and anyone who cares to

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listen to music or who plays any instrument will do well to read them. There are a few musical quotations which some of us have to skip but that does not matter much if at all.

The creator (with Disney) of "Fantasia" has all sorts of ideas for the future of music. Probably a great number of contemporary musicians are aware of the new technical resources brought by electrical inventions which broaden the possibilities of tonal expression; probably in the new music there will be innumerable new sounds. Sometimes Mr. Stokowski threatens the world of the future with a deluge of sound. And sometimes in reading his book we found ourselves hoping that there would still be, in the future, a concert hall where one had to buy a ticket, even save up the money for a ticket, wait in line in the rain for a ticket, hoping that inside there would be music not "for all of us" but for those of us who had taken the trouble to get into the hall in order to hear an orchestra play, without electrical amplification, without innovation, with instruments to watch and not too many electric organs hidden in the ceiling. Of course composers will do what they please using all the new devices; as they always have done, they will invent new instruments, new forms, renewed beauty. Of course Mr. Stokowski has a perfect right to look to the future. That is, just as long as he is talking technically. He has as great a right to look at the future as he has to look at the past, and all over the world at the present.

Our quarrel with him is when he becomes mystical: within his first fifty-four pages, music in some way or another is made to reflect the "Supreme Artist," the "Divine Mother"; music "calls to us from the Ideal"; the "soul of the Universe" is speaking; it is an important part of "Reality and Truth." All the capital letters are Mr. Stokowski's; the punctuation is by dashes. There are passages which read like the English text of Wagner's breathless love poetry. There are also, unfortunately, passages which read like an advertisement for a radio company. There is for instance this appalling remark: "One of the most ideal ways of listening to broadcast music is to drive to a remote lake or high up in the mountains and there hear music broadcast from a distant cultural center."

That "cultural center" is what we are afraid of. It is the grown-up equivalent of the Santa Barbara school mentioned by Mr. Stokowski in which adults hidden behind the furniture gravely record on disks the inspired musical improvizations of little children aged from one to eight. Culture and music and literature still need a room of their own, an autonomy of their own; they need to be left in peace, the bitterly won peace of solitude.

# More Books of the Week

*The Middle East, Crossroads of History. Eliahu Ben-Horin. Norton.* $3.00.

I SUBSCRIBE full-heartedly to the author's claim that few other spots on the globe present more complicated and involved problems than the Middle East. But just for this reason a survey of Middle Eastern problems needs a solid historical basis, honest impartiality and accuracy.

Ben-Horin's book is written with the skill of a sophisticated journalist, but is "journalistic" in the worst sense of the word: with inaccurate historical background, manifold errors, and clumsy bias, in spite of its remarkable formal brilliance.

Is it possible that the author of such a book never heard of the Byzantine empire? But how else can you explain Ben Horin's telling us emphatically—as a fact that "somehow escaped notice"—that other than the Crusaders no Christian power ever ruled Palestine before Field Marshal Allenby marched into Jerusalem? And how does it impress you to learn that the Ottoman Turks ruled the Arab countries for "nearly a millenium"? As a matter of fact it was only after the battle of Aleppo on January 24, 1516, that the Ottoman Turks started the invasion of Arab lands, where they ruled for less than four centuries. These are only two of the numerous misstatements to be found in this book.

About half of the book deals with the problems of Palestine, which the author considers the heartland of the Middle East. The modern conflicts of the twice-promised Holy Land are complicated enough. An author who claims to strive for an intelligent understanding of the Middle East has an ethical duty to show both sides of the picture, and to explain fairly how the determination of the Jews to build a "National Home" in Palestine inevitably clashed with the determination of the Palestine Arabs not to be reduced to a minority in their country and to have part in the setting up of an independent Arab state. Ben-Horin's book is pro-Zionist and still more vehemently anti-Arab. He judges the nations only from the standard of Westernization, he has no understanding for the qualities of the Bedouins and the source of unbroken vitality they are for the Arab future. He sees only the "backwardness" of the Arabs—forgetting how suddenly in the seventh century these Nomads of the desert had built not only an empire, but a culture as well. He thinks the Arabs are inferior to the Turks because they declined Kemal Ataturk's acceptance of the secularized Western civilization, clinging to their religion, their Arabic characters and their national customs—"fighting every progressive influence." While the Jews enrich Palestine with precious contributions in every sphere of human activity, "it is obvious that . . . no Arab contribution to world civilization could be expected."

This black and white theory on the two rival nations to whom contradictory promises had been given by the British is the background for the author's "solution" of the Palestine question. Hitler's practice of removing forcibly whole populations from one country to another has inspired Mr. Ben-Horin's advice to transfer the Palestine Arabs from their native soil into Iraq—in order to reserve the Holy Land to Jewish immigration. The need for a generous post war solution in favor of expatriated Jews is evident. But we are afraid that putting the author's plan into practice would not contribute to a durable pacification of the Holy Land, but endanger even modest chances of Jewish colonization in the Middle East. The settlement of the Judaeo-Arab dispute is not to be reached by British dictation in favor of one party, but by an honest compromise of both parties involved supplemented by the extraterritoriality of Christianity's Holy Places. MAX FISCHER.

*Boot Straps. Tom M. Girdler. Scribner.* $3.00.

I FEEL SORRY for Tom M. Girdler, chairman of the boards of Republic Steel, Vultee Aircraft and Consolidated Aircraft, who has just written his autobiography, "Boot Straps," with a little assistance from Boyden Sparks. Mr. Girdler is unhappy. He is unhappy because he is not satisfied with being rich and powerful and the

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idol of American labor-baiters. Mr. Girdler also wants to be recognized as a great friend of labor, a patriotic hero, an enlightened industrial statesman, an economic oracle and many other things too wonderful to describe in mere words. It is really a shame that people won't cooperate.

I admit that particularly in the pre-Republic part of his career Mr. Girdler appears more likeable than we had expected. The title does not hit the nail exactly on the noggin, for his father was superintendent of an Indiana cement mill, which was only one of the mills owned by a wealthy aunt and uncle who put him through a hectic four years at Lehigh University, where upon graduation he received from his classmates 39 votes (an overwhelming majority) for "best story teller," 5 votes for "handsomest" and 1 for "done most for class."

Nevertheless, the young Tom Girdler did demonstrate first rate mechanical ability, a great capacity for hard work, tremendous drive and a consuming ambition to get ahead. He may not have started from the bottom, but he did work and fight his way up from wherever it was to wherever he is now, which is more than high enough. And in spite of everything he has the honesty to make at least one admission of guilt: "Through what it did to me I learned that the twelve-hour day of the steel industry was industrial barbarism. Yet I am obliged to confess that when I had greater responsibility and authority I was nearly as slow as other managers to see my way clear to changing the system."

So much for the assets. Including the index, "Boot Straps" has 470 pages and of these 144 are devoted to the Little Steel strike of 1937, which featured the Memorial Day massacre in front of Republic's Chicago plant and Mr. Girdler's famous remark that he would never sign a CIO contract. On August 11, 1942, Mr. Girdler inclined his head slightly to the inevitable and concluded an agreement with the CIO, but he is at pains to point out that he did not sign it himself. It was signed by J. A. Voss, director of industrial relations. Thus are great faces saved for posterity.

Mr. Girdler doesn't mention that famous remark, but he does mention the fact that Republic Steel proceeded on the assumption that the Wagner Act would be declared unconstitutional, and it is obvious that he and his subordinates did plenty to discourage membership in the CIO. And it is also obvious that Tom Girdler would do the same things all over again. He is not one little bit ashamed of his attitude or actions during the Little Steel strike. In fact, he seems downright proud of them.

To him it seems to have been purely a question of lawless, violent mobs of imported goons—instigated and led by communists and power-mad racketeers and politicians—who tried by force to keep his loyal, happy employees from sticking to their jobs. It is true, of course, that in certain Republic plants the nineteen thirty-seven strike was premature. But Mr. Girdler is most fastidious in avoiding mention of those plants where a majority were clearly in favor of the strike. And nowhere do we read that he was willing to have a Labor Board election in any plant to determine the preference of his employees. And repeatedly we read that the main reason he would not sign a CIO contract was because such a contract would be the first step toward a closed shop and check-off, and such things would be a hideous violation of the sacred right to work.

Mr. Girdler's book is chock-a-block with every manner of paean, hymn, chant and incantation to the profit motive

# *This Publishing Business*

One of the prime duties of the human race is to get itself carried on—to get new children born and nurtured to maturity. It is not everyone's job, but it is the race's job. But this carrying on of the race—a difficult and delicate matter demanding a certain repose and a certain stability—is made dependent upon sex-appetite, the stormiest and unruliest of all human appetites. The problem then is how the stormy and unruly thing is to be made to subserve the thing that demands permanence and stability. The answer is marriage.

Marriage takes hold of sex, orders, controls and directs it: and the new generations of men are born and reared. Nor is sex diminished but immensely enriched—for it is concentrated and not dissipated, drawing strength from life as a totality instead of being isolated in an autonomy for which it is not big enough. Any serious consideration of marriage must begin with its place between sex and the future of the race, as it adapts the one for the use of the other.

But when Mr. Jones decides that he wants to marry Miss Smith, he is not thinking overmuch about his duty to the human race. Nor would Miss Smith want him to be. If he urged her to marry him at once because the falling birth-rate was a menace to the country's future, she might well feel that his wooing was a good deal too sociological.

A complete view of marriage must contain both these elements. Nature wants what *it* wants, namely the continuance of the race; Mr. Jones wants what *he* wants, namely Miss Smith. Ignore either, and you ruin marriage.

The tendency today is to concentrate exclusively on what Mr. Jones wants; and this proves disastrous. For Mr. Jones, flattered by so much attention, discovers that he wants not only Miss Smith but any number of other ladies besides. He gets a good deal of experience in the process and there is a good deal of chaos, and the only certain result is that everybody concerned is a good deal cheapened and the average level of happiness somehow falls.

Now you will not remedy the exclusive concentration on what Mr. Jones wants by ignoring Mr. Jones and concentrating exclusively on the more general purposes of marriage: which is what a good many Catholic treatises on marriage do. Marriage *has* a vast religious significance and a vast sociological significance, but somehow the glamour of it and the plain human fun of it seem to have evaporated. Suspect *any* treatment of marriage which omits the passion and the joy.

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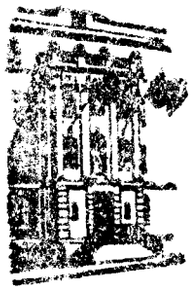

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and the right to work, by which he means, of course, the *excess* profit motive and the right to work on the employer's terms—or starve. It is also very funny indeed, meaning peculiar, that Mr. Girdler never seems to have given a thought to the sacred right to work in the earlier thirties when he was busy laying off men—with how much genuine regret!—because, as he neither understands nor cares, he and his fellow industrialists had been gorging themselves on profits all during the "fabulous twenties."

In a rather pathetic passage early in the book Mr. Girdler speaks of the terrible poverty he witnessed among the lower classes in London, and asks, "Was all this due to some monstrous failing of the social system? I don't know."

Well, all I can say by way of conclusion to Mr. Girdler is that he can bet his sweet life that it *was* due to some monstrous failing in the social system, and that if he doesn't know what it was, maybe it would be much more sensible not to go around making silly remarks about how to solve poverty and unemployment. It really isn't dignified, Mr. Girdler. Every page of your book reveals that you just don't know. JOHN C. CORT.

*Pilgrims All. Collected by Mary McKenna Curtin. Bruce. $2.75.*

THIS collection of "short stories by contemporary Catholics" contains twenty-eight selections, many by names familiar to COMMONWEAL columns: Ruth K. Byrns, Padraic Colum, Albert Eisele, Richard Sullivan and Harry Sylvester. Many have not previously appeared in book form.

There are several excellent tales, including Chesterton's familiar "Hammer of God"; Sylvester's "Man Going Home"—victory over black melancholy; J. A. Hammett's "The Woman Hanged Twice," a murder story with something of the atmosphere of Poe; "The Peacemaker," an amusing parable by Enid Dinnis, with both monastery and universal application; and the simple Irish stories, "The Return" by Michael McLaverty—where a love-worn hearth proves more comforting than new fires—and "The Story-Teller" by Frank O'Connor—where age and youth meet in the flash of realization that myths and ideals have much in common as sparks of life.

Paul Horgan's story of the maturing of two Mexican boys on a hunting trip; Teresa Brom's of the ironic disappointments which come to a Moravian peasant who lived in others; Sheila Kaye-Smith's rounded picture of marriage and freedom under conflicting concepts; Thomas Healy's and Richard Sullivan's successful portraits of child life: these also deserve high ranking. The selections from the two Colums, Grahame Greene, Noyes, O'Faoláin and Belloc are disappointing.

In her introduction, Mrs. Curtin pleads for more recognition and more use of the short-story form by Catholic writers. Whether Catholics have achieved literature in this *genre* is open to discussion, especially when a mere fourth of the total in the anthology seems striking. There are few well-spun tales and some natural dialogue; too much concern over technique and proper pattern, or mere pietistic intent. One fact should be observed. Of the Americans who attended Catholic colleges—as gleaned from the biographical notes—three are from Notre Dame, and one each from Canisius, Duquesne, Regis, St. Mary's, Wisconsin and St. Teresa, Minnesota. The volume may stimulate others to produce better work and to confound the sparse representation in what should be a satisfactory literary medium. JAMES EDWARD TOBIN.

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# The Inner Forum

## Greek Rite Catholics in the U. S.

THE SPIRITUAL CENTER for Catholics of the Greek Rite in this country is the motherhouse of the Sisters of Saint Basil near Uniontown, Pa., according to the semi-official *Eastern Observer*. Mount Saint Macrina, which was founded there ten years ago, is the scene of an annual pilgrimage on the Feast of the Assumption, the day on which the faithful of this rite celebrate Our Lady's death, resurrection and ascension into Heaven. Including the Vigil and the Octave, the observance lasts ten days, and besides that it is preceded by a sort of Lenten period of two weeks.

The image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, which was given to the Sisters with the paternal blessing of Pope Pius XI, is venerated in the Lady Chapel of the Motherhouse. This ikon was painted in the East and brought to Rome from the Island of Crete at the time of the Turkish invasion in the latter part of the fifteenth century. This picture, which measures twelve by fifteen inches, is painted on wood in the Byzantine style. It represents the Christ Child roused from sleep on His Mother's arm by the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, who bear the cross, the nails and other symbols of His Passion.

The climax of the pilgrimage this year came on Labor Day, when at 11 A.M. Bishop Basil Takach celebrated the Pontifical Divine Liturgy at an open air altar before the entrance to the convent. Sermons were preached in Hungarian, Russian and English. "The most inspiring, because of its penitential spirit, was the devotion of the Way of the Cross. This is really an Eastern devotion, deeply anchored at Jerusalem in the mournful way of Our Lord from the court of Pilate to Calvary and from there to His tomb. We conduct this Way of the Cross spiritually and mentally at the Reading of the Twelve Passion Gospels (Strasti) on Great Thursday (Velikiy Chetverh). It is about an hour's travel from the first Station to the fourteenth, on the spacious lawns of the Monastery grounds, a distance of almost a mile."

Bishop Takach resides in Pittsburgh, Pa. His See extends from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from Canada to Mexico. There are Greek Catholic churches in Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and other states. Communicants are estimated at somewhat over a quarter of a million, and include Russians, Hungarians and Croats of this rite.

### CONTRIBUTORS

*T. D. LYONS* again contributes one of his sketches of life in the Dakotas. Judge Lyons practiced law in Oklahoma for many years.

*Theodore MAYNARD*, whose last book is "The Reed and the Rock," is bringing out this fall a biography of Orestes Brownson.

*Max FISCHER* is a European journalist who frequently contributes to THE COMMONWEAL. He has lived in New York for about ten years.

*James Edward TOBIN* teaches in the English Department of Fordham University.


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